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element of the problems there working out, great because he is equipped through long experience to recognize the true terms of the problems. In support of his conviction that there is a future of social development for the African among his own people and in his own home he is singularly fortunate in that Nigeria has afforded a few conspicuous examples of what the African can make of himself in the acquisition of European culture and in the employment thereof for the betterment of his own kind; Blyden is such an one, his life gainsays all the cheap sneer that the African, under the curse of Ham, must always be servile. One point which Morel makes is of peculiar interest. The tangle of languages is great. In the Bauchi province, one of quite small extent, no less than sixty-five distinct languages are in daily use. The English administrators seldom acquire any of these languages, but are forcing upon their territory a new language, semi-jargon in type, that of the Hausa, which has come into use as a trade, and above all as a military, speech. Even the Hausa takes some time to acquire, and for climatic reasons the tour of duty of each official is very brief, therefore, the Kroobov jargon of the Oil Coast is becoming standard for general employment. All this entails a degradation of such indigenous culture as has already developed and works automatically to check the normal evolution which should follow under improved social conditions and which should lead to an African advance.

WILLIAM CHURCHILL.

### ASIA

**On and Off Duty in Annam.** By Gabrielle M. Vassal. xi and 283 pp. Map, ills., index. D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1910. 9 x 6½.

Ephemeral though works of this type must be in their very essence, sure to be displaced by later and more complete narratives, we cannot have too many of them. Never yet has there been a survey so complete and so detailed as to erase the value of the preliminary reconnaissance, the accuracy of the noting of fact without connotation and the enthusiasm of the observation of that which is new and newly found. This work is very personal, it is the opening of a new world to Mrs. Vassal, and because it is a new world to the most of us we are all the better pleased to find that the recorder is just such an observer as any of us should be. She starts with the most important thing about her observation of Annam, "a few weeks after our marriage we got marching orders for Annam." In the brief table of the scientific results of what, with the utmost naïveté, she calls "making collections" we encounter *Cissa gabriellae*, *Lepus vassali*, and *Presbytis margarita*, which may perhaps be an expansion of a middle name hidden beneath an initial. Experience shows that these new species will probably overload the synonymy, but at any rate the friends at home were mindful of her and that is something to bear in mind when one is far away. We welcome Mrs. Vassal in Annam, we welcome her experiences, because she was very observant and set down all the strange things which came her way with no more involved feeling than that because they were of huge interest to her they would be interesting to others. In this new space and the life which fills it she has had no more involved purpose than to make collections. There results a storehouse of information, ethnology of a sort, civic studies of another sort, geography. None of this material will lose its value; observation at first hand is worthy of preservation since it must serve as the best basis for the later and more valuable comparative study.

Her best contribution to geography—for the littoral of Annam is quite well covered in French governmental administrative reports—is the narrative of her excursion to the hills of the less well known interior, somewhat more than a third of the volume. The distance amounts to no more than 200 kilometres, yet from the first night's halting place the country has practically never been recorded. At Daban on the high plateau we learn that a beginning has been made toward the establishment of an agricultural station and that the future of this French possession must rest upon the clear air and wholesome surroundings of these higher lands where Europeans may escape the enervation of the steaming swamps of the coast line. In the hills she records the life of the Mois, a race which seems to be a remnant of that little known people whose scattered remains appear as enclaves in the overlying civilization of the Peninsula all the way from Burma to China.

WILLIAM CHURCHILL.